

Hagyard Equine Medical Institute Provides Extensive MRI Services for Sport Horses

Lexington, KY - June 22, 2009 - Hagyard Equine Medical Institute, located directly across from the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, KY, offers a state-of-the-art facility and MRI unit for its diverse equine clientele. The Hagyard Sport Horse program specializes in high performance equine athletes, such as show jumping, dressage, and eventing horses, and the institute remains one of the leading medical providers for world-renowned thoroughbred race horses and international breeding practices. Through its exemplary technology, the institute is able to diagnose and treat medical issues in sport horses at a highly advanced level.

The facility is one of two in the nation that offers the high quality Siemens 1.5 Tesla Espree "open" MRI. This is the most advanced MRI unit available, and it allows Hagyard veterinarians to image anatomical areas of the horse that have not been visually accessible in the past.

"Our MRI takes images of everything from the head, hooves and stifles to bones and the swelling inside of bones," commented Dr. Andy Clark, CEO of Hagyard Equine Medical Institute. "You can look at the knee of a racing thoroughbred and actually see the swelling and fluid accumulation that is present in bone before a fracture happens."

One of many uses for MRI imaging is to examine hooves. Veterinarians are able to see all of the anatomical structures and ligaments within the foot, helping them pinpoint problematic issues. Dr. Clark stated, "In the past, many foot problems were categorized simply as Navicular [Syndrome]. Now we can truly see what is going on in the hoof and see what is treatable and what is not. It's the sort of advancement that X-Ray was to bone earlier on and that ultrasound was to the tendon, but now we are able to look at the musculoskeletal system in terms of orthopedic work."

The construction of Hagyard's MRI unit, which has a large center opening and shorter sides, allows veterinarians to examine such areas of the horse as its head, neck, stifles, and hock joints, as well as the lower legs. The machine can even take a full MRI of foals weighting up to 500 lbs.

"The physics of the MRI are challenging," said Dr. Clark. "Essentially, you have a huge magnet that creates an electromagnetic field. The field strength of the magnet can be .5 Tesla, 1 Tesla, 1.5 Tesla, et cetera. In short, this impacts the tissues, and you're able to image the tissues, cartilage, and ligaments in a thorough manner."

Dr. Clark also explains the benefits of Hagyard's 1.5 Tesla MRI and its high magnetic field. "If you think about slicing cheese, you can slice it really thick or really thin. If you look at each piece, the thicker you slice it, the less information you have in front of you. When you have a low magnetic field or a high field with a lower Tesla capacity, your slices are thicker and fewer in number," he said. "With our MRI, which has a high magnetic field, we can pick up more slices. Therefore, we have a better opportunity to find out what's really going on inside."

The strength of the high field magnet also allows a shorter acquisition time, meaning it takes less time to do a full study and obtain a large amount of information. "We have very rigid guidelines because it's a general anesthesia procedure," noted Dr. Clark. "We only have a certain amount of time to perform the exam. The higher the magnetic field, the more information you get and the less time you need to keep the animal under anesthesia."

Aside from the very best equipment, Hagyard MRI has an excellent team of specialists and veterinarians. Cindy Hall joined the program after years of specializing in human MRI technology. "We didn't want to have a homegrown technician trying to learn how to do this," explained Dr. Clark. "We wanted to hit the ground with the best technician out there - someone who worked in the human field, had performed

installations, and was entrepreneurial enough to start with new technology in a new program. We are fortunate to have found that perfect person."

In addition to MRI, the facility at Hagyard Equine Medical Institute also offers 13 Digital Radiology systems, Nuclear Scintigraphy, a high speed treadmill, an on-site laboratory, an on-site pharmacy, full surgical services, 24-hour ambulance and emergency services, and Hyperbaric Medicine. Hagyard Equine Medical Institute has practiced veterinary medicine for more than 133 years and is currently composed of over 60 experienced veterinarians, with 12 board certifications in specialty areas of Medicine, Surgery, Critical Care, and Theriogenology.

For more information on Hagyard Equine Medical Institute, please visit their official Web site at www.hagyard.com.